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Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

Procuring rail passenger services

1. What are the merits of offering the ScotRail franchise as a dual focus franchise and what services should be covered by the economic rail element, and what by the social rail element?

Q1 comments: Better opportunity for community involvement if the 'social' model is adopted. This could tie into reducing running costs of rarely used stations

2. What should be the length of the contract for future franchises, and what factors lead you to this view?

Q2 comments: Longer franchises are better. Most travellers have little or no feeling for the presence or otherwise of franchises, they just want a good service. Long franchises allow franchisees to plan well ahead.

3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments: I'd say share the pain and the gain.

4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

Q4 comments: Not sure

5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments: Not sure

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

Q6 comments: Not sure

7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?

Q7 comments: I can see that large bonds are expensive, but that financial security is needed. It's a tricky one!

8. What sanctions should be used to ensure the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments?

Q8 comments: This must hang on first class procurement and selection of financially robust franchisees

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

9. Under the franchise, should we incentivise good performance or only penalise poor performance?

Q9 comments: Incentivise the good, but look to limit scope for spending this revenue.

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Q10 comments: Align it with routes. You can't have one system that covers inter city commuting and West Highland.

11. How can we make the performance regime more aligned with passenger issues?

Q11 comments: Not sure

12. What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

Q12 comments: It has to be a combination, but I'm more interested in actually getting there than being exactly on time.

13. Is a Service Quality Incentive Regime required? And if so should it cover all aspects of stations and service delivery, or just those being managed through the franchise?

Q13 comments: It is needed but could be tweaked. Community involvement at remote stations could save a lot of money and maybe enhance performance

14. What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

Q14 comments: Actually ask passengers while they're using them

Scottish train services

15. Can better use be made of existing train capacity, such as increasing the permitted standing time beyond the limit of 10 minutes or increasing the

capacity limit? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail services?

Q15 comments: Cancel 1st class provision more on busy services. 10 minutes is fine for me but not for my granny – so it depends on the individual.

16. Should the number of services making use of interchange stations (both rail to rail and rail to other modes) be increased to reduce the number of direct services? What would be the opportunities and challenges of this?

Q16 comments: If you did this you'd need to really focus on integrating services, providing good waiting facilities and keeping total journey times down.

17. Should Government direct aspects of service provision such as frequency and journey time, or would these be better determined by the franchisee based on customer demand?

Q17 comments: Better guided by demand.

18. What level of contract specification should we use for the next ScotRail franchise?

Q18 comments: Not sure, sorry

19. How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to be innovative in the provision of services?

Q19 comments:

Scottish rail fares

20. What should be the rationale for, and purpose of, our fares policy?

Q20 comments: Maximise rail use without causing overcrowding

21. What fares should be regulated by government and what should be set on a commercial basis? Do your recommendations change by geographic area (the Strathclyde area example), or by type of journey (for example suburban or intercity)?

Q21 comments: Remote 'lifeline' services no doubt need subsidy – my view is if you're going to run a train, it's better if it's full so fare structures could work to optimise capacity. Where other modes are overcrowded it might make sense to subsidise so that the train can alleviate this.

22. How should we achieve a balance between the taxpayer subsidy and passenger revenue contributions in funding the Scottish rail network? At what rate should fares be increased, and how feasible would it be to apply higher increases to Sections of the network which have recently been enhanced?

Q22 comments: It's hard to sell increases that exceed inflation. Where enhancements have improved journey times you might be able to increase fares a little further.

23. What should the difference be between peak and off-peak fares? Will this help encourage people to switch to travelling in the off-peak?

Q23 comments: I think the difference is about right at the moment

Scottish stations

24. How should we determine what rail stations are required and where, including whether a station should be closed?

Q24 comments: Must be based on robust market research

25. What are the merits or issues that arise from a third party (such as a local authority or local business) being able to propose, promote and fund a station or service?

Q25 comments: Local initiatives will benefit from local goodwill so might require less central input. Care needs to be taken to ensure extra new stops don't erode service efficiency by increasing journey time.

26. Should only one organisation be responsible for the management and maintenance of stations? If this was the franchisee how should that responsibility be structured in terms of leasing, investment, and issues relating to residual capital value?

Q26 comments: No. Local groups could assist.

27. How can local communities be encouraged to support their local station?

Q27 comments: Perhaps by allowing station buildings to be used for other purposes –Dingwall is a good example.

28. What categories of station should be designated and what facilities should be available at each category of station?

Q28 comments: I don't really understand what this question is asking.

Cross-border services

29. Should cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh? In operating alongside ScotRail services, how do cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers? And who should specify these services, the Department of Transport or the Scottish Ministers?

Q29 comments: If you're going to make people change at Edinburgh that needs to be made really quick and easy. Good integration of timetables, close proximity of platforms, easy access to free porters for elderly / disabled perhaps

30. Or should the cross-border services terminate at Edinburgh Waverley, allowing opportunities for Scottish connections? And if so, what additional benefits would accrue from having an Edinburgh Hub?

Q30 comments:

Rolling stock

31. What alternative strategies or mechanisms could be used to reduce the cost of the provision of rolling stock?

Q31 comments: Don't know

32. What facilities should be present on a train and to what extent should these facilities vary according to the route served?

Q32 comments: Better and more reliable internet access would encourage more business users.

Passengers – information, security and services

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Q33 comments: Identify need by careful market research

34. How should we balance the need for additional seating capacity and retain the flexibility of a franchisee to offer first-class services if commercially viable?

Q34 comments: Tricky! Not sure.

35. What issues and evidence should be considered prior to determining whether or not to ban the consumption of alcohol on trains?

Q35 comments: I think the existing rules are fine.

36. How can the provision of travel information for passengers be further improved?

Q36 comments: Maybe smartphone apps that link into live train information (maybe they already exist?!) Ensure on-train staff have at least as good access to such info as passengers!

Caledonian Sleeper

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Q37 comments: Yes you should. Sell it more though, it's a real adventure and I think you miss a trick not advertising it in that way.

38. Should the Caledonian Sleeper services be contracted for separately from the main ScotRail franchise? Or should it be an option for within the main ScotRail franchise?

Q38 comments: I have no strong view on this.

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- What is the appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper Service, and if there were more early and late trains would the appeal of the sleeper services change?
- What is the value of sleeper services to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen and are these the correct destinations, for example would Oban provide better connectivity?
- What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments: It can appeal on two levels – a unique part of a trip to the UK for tourists, and a practical alternative to the ‘redeye’ early morning flights. You might want them to reach Euston and Glasgow / Edinburgh in time for people to have a shower and reach a city centre meeting at 9ish – I think they maybe arrive quite early at the moment? What about decent onboard showers?

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

Q40 comments: Not sure.